

February 1st, 2016

Dear Chair Gelser and members of the Human Services and Early Childhood Committee:

My name is Kristen Brooks, and I serve as Housing and Community Development Commissioner for the city of Medford.

Medford is suffering from a rising need for workforce housing and low available inventory. Our current rental vacancy in the county is at 1.1%. As a result we are seeing veterans' emergency housing vouchers returned because there is not enough housing being developed. The impact on working families can be seen in recently released data from the Oregon Department of Education where Medford School District ranks 4th in the state for number of homeless students. These impacts undermine the stability of our community and of the workforce we need to reach our economic development goals.

Addressing this issue is a priority reflected in our planning process. In the adopted 2015-2019 Consolidated Plan for Housing and Urban Development, adopted by the City Council on May 7, 2015, lack of inclusionary zoning was identified as a potential barrier to affordable housing. The Plan also identified House Bill 2564 as a potential action to remove or ameliorate the negative effects of public policies that serve as barriers to affordable housing.

For these reasons, among others, the Medford Housing and Community Development Commission passed a motion this January urging the Medford City Council to endorse SB 1533. This request is currently being considered by the Medford Council.

Please support Senate Bill 1533 to lift the ban on inclusionary zoning, and restore this tool to the local leaders who have pledged to serve our community's needs. Local cities are tasked with ensuring that our communities have the housing and development they need, but to do this we must have a full set of tools at our disposal.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kristen Brooks

Kristen Brooks, Housing and Community Development Commissioner for the City of Medford